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Convention for the Rights of Older Persons
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Good afternoon. I am Jacob Lozada, a member of AARP's Board of Directors. I'm pleased to be here with all of you to recognize what we at AARP view is a vital topic for the current and future needs of the world's aging population.

As you may be aware, AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan social welfare organization. For more than 50 years, we have worked tirelessly to fulfill the vision of a society in which everyone lives their life with dignity and purpose, and in which people can fulfill their goals and dreams.

But what you may not know is that for almost four decades, we have enjoyed partnering and participating at the United Nations. Through our work with the UN, and other international efforts – we liaise with governments, NGOs, business and academics to bring about positive social change and address the economic factors of global aging.

Also, our international initiatives foster exchanges of ideas and seek innovative ways to address the opportunities and challenges of aging.

We realize that to be effective, social change – particularly among the aging – must happen on a global scale. A far-reaching approach is crucial because the proportion of people 60 years and over is growing worldwide... and, in fact, will continue to grow faster than any other age group due to declining fertility and rising longevity.

Add to that, the cohort of those over 60 is expected to increase from about **600 million** in 2002 to over **two billion** in 2050. Statistics show also that in developing countries, this increase will be most dramatic, where the number of older people is expected to **triple** during the next 40 years.

So as you see, this is a demographic that simply cannot be ignored, and one whose needs and desires should be immediately addressed. These numbers mean also that the world's aging population has a voice. They are valuable contributors to society and will remain relevant and viable for years to come. Many people in the aging population still work, raise families, or volunteer – but even still, much more support is needed to ensure these activities can continue later in life.

Sixty-two years ago when The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN's General Assembly, it proclaimed, "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind."

Also, one of the UN's former High Commissioners for Human Rights, and the first woman Irish president, Mary Robinson is quoted saying, "The aim is to push beyond standard-setting and asserting human rights to make those standards a living reality for people everywhere."

Fast forwarding to today, we are still working to make the rights of the aging a part of the broader human rights reality. What we see now is that the lack of policies covering these issues is condemning millions of older people to a life of poverty – instead of recognizing the active economic and social contributions they can, and **do** make to their families and communities.

What's more, the rights of older people are embedded, yet not specific in international human rights conventions on economic, social, civil, cultural and political rights.

Some rights may have more relevance in older age than at other times in life – for example, the right to Social Security in the form of a pension, or the right to access to appropriate health and social care services. In short, protecting older people's rights will help to enable them to lead dignified, secure lives, as equal members of society.

Unfortunately, existing international and regional human rights laws do not sufficiently protect the rights of the aging population. Standards are scattered throughout various international conventions. By bringing the relevant provisions in one text – as was done successfully for the rights of women, children and disabled people – would as well clarify the nature of older people's rights and the responsibilities necessary to protect them.

The best way to move the needle toward equal treatment of the aging population is to first, recognize the Human rights and development go hand in hand. Increased protection of the rights of older men and women creates the conditions which enable them to participate in and contribute to their own development, as well as that of those around them.

As a result, a human rights instrument would:

- (1)** Combat ageism and age discrimination; and,
- (2)** Guide policy-making.

These initial steps would begin to tackle the many concerns of the aging and shift the focus on the aging from marginal to a high priority.

In conclusion, we would like to commend the United Nations and the member states for their work and commitment to ensuring that people all over the world are given the dignity and respect that they deserve.

Thank you.